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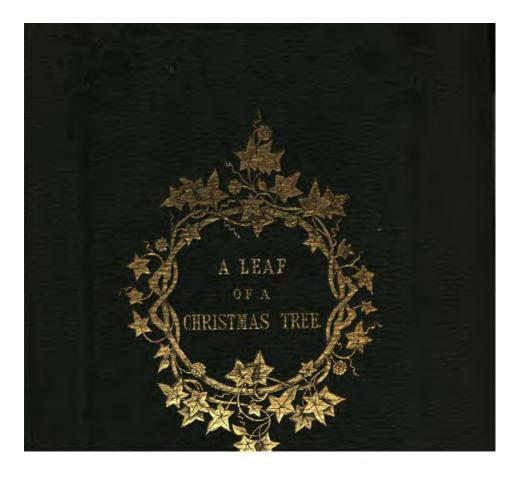
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## A LEAF

OF

## A CHRISTMAS TREE.





# A LEAF

OF

## A CHRISTMAS TREE.

From the German.

JAJ

EDITED BY THE REV. F. GILBERT WHITE, M.A.

LONDON:
THOMAS BOSWORTH, 215 REGENT STREET.
1852.

249. t. 685.

#### LONDON:

Printed by G. BARCLAY, Castle St. Leicester Sq.

#### TO HER EXCELLENCY

## THE COUNTESS OF EGLINTON,

THESE TALES ARE, BY PERMISSION,

### Bedicated,

WITH THE DEEPEST RESPECT AND GRATITUDE, BY

THE TRANSLATOR

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### TO YOUNG READERS.

To all Children the Editor heartily commends this bright "Leaf of a Christmas Tree;" for among Children he feels happy in counting over many dear friends, whom he can at all times love, trust, and care for. It may, he thinks, give them pleasure to know that these Tales are now published for the benefit of two such little friends, the one a dark-eyed boy of six, and the other a fair-haired maiden of four, who, by the death of their Father (a Clergyman) in the Irish Fever of 1848, were left to the sole care of their widowed

Mother, herself wholly unprovided for, and "a stranger in a foreign land." To that foreign land she has nevertheless clung, in hopes that she may be enabled to bring up her little ones in the Church of their Father, and their Fathers' Fathers; and, as an aid towards their maintenance, she has now translated these Tales of her own German "Fatherland."

For the sake of his little Friends, the Editor trusts that these fair flowers of German soil will not droop through being transplanted, but will now flourish like Christmas roses amid the snows of merry old England's Christmas-tide.

F. G. W.

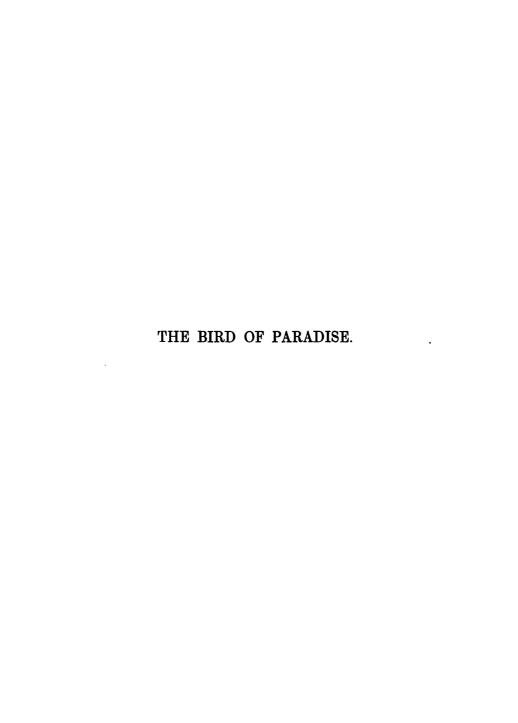
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#### THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

THERE was once a time when there was no Fable; and this was a sad time for Children, for the most beautiful Flower was missing in their garden. In those days two Children of a King played in their Father's beautiful garden. This Garden was filled with lovely flowers, the paths were gravelled with glistening stones and golden sand. There was also in the garden a Grotto, which had within it a Fountain, whose waters ascended to a great height; this was surrounded with beautiful Statues of marble, which were reflected in the watery mirror; and all around were pleasant seats. Gold and silver Fishes played in the water; a collection of the most beautiful Birds filled the air with their harmony. the two royal Children had seen all this every day; and they were tired of the brightness of the stones, the perfume of the flowers, and the singing of the birds whose chaunts they did not understand. The Children sat quietly together, and were sad. They had all that could make children happy: good Parents, nice toys, beautiful clothes, the best to eat and to drink, and leave to play as much as they liked in the lovely Garden; yet they were sad, and they did not know why, nor what they wanted. Then the Queen, their Mother, a beautiful lady with a mild and lovely expression, went to them. She was distressed that her Children met her with a sad and faint smile, instead of dancing with the glee of youthful happiness. She was pained that her Children should not be happy in their youth, as children generally are, who know not of any cares, and see their heaven unclouded. The Queenly mother sat down beside her Children, a Boy and a Girl, put one of her fair round arms ornamented with bracelets around each of them, and asked very tenderly:

- "What is the matter, my dear Children?"
- "We do not know, dear Mama," replied the Boy.
- "We are so sad," said the Girl.
- "This is a beautiful Garden, and you have everything that can give you pleasure, and yet you are not happy," said the Queen, with a tear in her eye, out of which beamed kindness and love.
- "What we have does not give us enough pleasure," said the Girl.
- "We wish for something and do not know for what," added the Boy.

The Royal Mother mused silently, thinking what could give them yet more pleasure than a beautiful garden, splendid dresses, a multitude of toys, and dainty feasts; but she found not

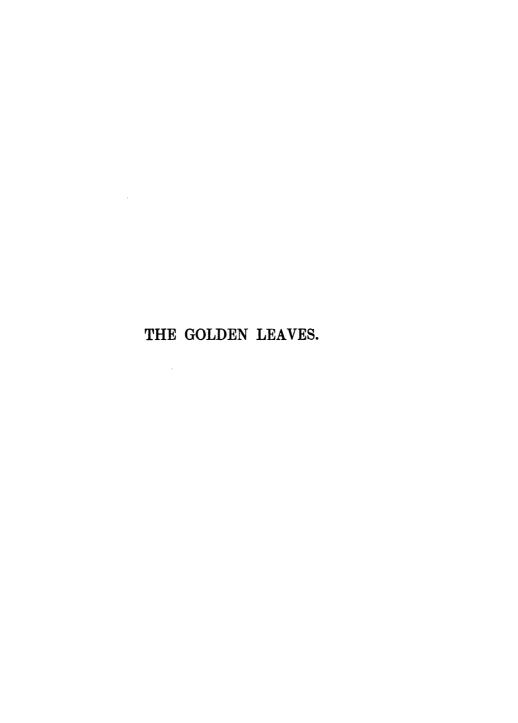
that of which her thoughts were in search. "Oh, if I were only a child again," thought the Queen with a sigh, "then I should easily find out what makes a Child happy. To comprehend a child's wishes, one must become a child. But my ideas have travelled too far from the land of childhood, where the golden birds fly through the trees of Paradise—those Birds which have no feet, because they are never tired, and require no rest. Oh, that such a Bird would come to my Children, and bring them something to make them happy!" And behold! whilst the Queen was wishing, it came to pass that one of those footless and brilliantly-winged birds flew down, and approached them nearer and nearer till they actually heard the soft motion of its glittering wings; and before they could guess the direction it would take, it had alighted in the Queen's lap. Now the Queen, who had almost forgotten

the Bird that had made her so happy when she was a child, looked at the curious Bird with new interest, and the Children observed that its eyes were like a very happy Child's; but still there was something strange and mysterious about it, so that they did not venture to touch it: they saw also that there were a few black feathers among its golden plumage. The Children looked and looked, and scarcely perceived that the Bird was ascending; but when it had vanished out of sight, and their eyes returned to their Mother's lap where it had been seated, behold! there lay a golden egg so very beautiful and varied in its shades that they quite forgot the Bird who had laid it.

"It is warm," said the little Girl, who was the first to venture to touch it with her rosy fingers. The Boy also tried it, and found it warm; at last the Queen touched it, but her touch broke the spell: the shell burst in two, and out of the egg came that

mysterious Being called Fable. It is now a Fairy, now a Giant, here a Bird with the eyes of a child, there a Cat which changes into a lovely Princess, a Bird, a Frog-ever varying in its forms, always new to a mind that has kept fresh and unfaded within what yet remains in human nature of that which it lost with Paradise—a child-like heart, which though grown up can enjoy the charms that Fable spreads over the palace as well as the cottage. The Queen, who saw her Children in perfect happiness, found that she had not lost what she had been lamenting as lost; but that she was yet a child with her Children; and with her they truly enjoyed Fable, and she with them, and all sadness for ever left their youthful Eden.

When I told this to Max, he said, "Now, Mama, do you be Fable, and go on telling us one story after another, and we shall be as happy as the Queen's Children."









#### THE GOLDEN LEAVES.

MANY people do not know what it is to be poor; for they have enough to eat every day, and a warm room to sit down in when they feel cold; and for that reason they cannot sympathise with those who have not. But a poor Widow knew it too well as she sat one cold winter's evening with her three little children in her poor cottage. She was ill, and could no longer earn anything.

"Dear mother, give us something to eat, we are so hungry," cried the three children. "Dear mother, we are so cold; give us warm covering, and put some wood on the fire." But there was nothing, save the helpless tears of the poor widow. Then little Thomas rose and said,—

"I will go out and beg; perhaps I may meet a tender heart, who will give me some money, that I may buy bread for you;" and, poor boy, he went with a heavy heart, for he had never begged before. A rich gentleman came in his way, but he did not listen to poor Thomas's request, and only said,—

"Dear Child, I have no money for you to-day."

"As God pleases," thought little Thomas. "I would willingly suffer hunger, if only my poor Mother and my little Sisters had a bit of bread." He wept bitterly, and went into the forest close by to gather a few dry sticks, so as at least to get some firing. But the good God in heaven saw the pious poverty of the Child in the deep wood, and He is a true Father to all men. Now listen what happened. While the little Boy, being very

tired with hunger and with searching for sticks, sat down under a tree, and clasping his half-frozen hands prayed that God might send help, he saw a most beautiful Child coming towards him, who said, "A good Child never despairs in time of need; I come to help you. Here, take this little Wand, and use it well. It has this peculiarity, that if it touches the leaves on the trees in this forest, the branches begin to shake, and golden Leaves fall down; but he who asks for more than he wants shall be punished."

After the beautiful little Stranger had said these words, he vanished. It may have been an Angel, whom God in his mercy sent. Thomas did not know rightly whether he was waking or dreaming: he felt frightened as he held the Wand in his hand, but he bethought himself that the heavenly Father must have sent this help for his good Mother as an assistance in all her troubles;

and being convinced of this he went to the first Beech-tree, which had still a few withered leaves on it, and said:—

"Thou, darling Tree, of thee I pray;
I strike thy boughs, thou darling Tree:
Shed down, O shed, one golden spray,
One golden spray, O yield it me."

Then, behold, a leaf fell down, and it was of pure gold. Little Thomas danced and jumped for joy, and ran home to his Mother as fast as he could, to tell her of this wonderful help. Poverty now vanished out of the house, but not humility. The mother asked not for more golden leaves than she really wanted for plain living, and for enabling her to bring up her three Children, so that they might learn something, in order to be able to work for and help themselves hereafter. But many a golden Leaf dropped from the tree for the purpose

of lending aid to some poor neighbour. Thomas attended school regularly, and was always nicely and cleanly dressed; far otherwise than in his former condition, when he had had to go barefoot and with worn-out clothes. This, as well as everything else in the Widow's house, drew people's attention to it: and one day, when Thomas was going home from school, one of his School-fellows took him aside. He was a bad and forward Boy, who would do no good anywhere. He talked to Thomas till he had learned the whole story about the Wand; and as he began to tell a most lamentable story of his great poverty, Thomas could no longer refuse him the loan of his Wand. But the Boy had a bad intention. He said to himself,— "If I once get hold of this miraculous Wand, I will use it better than this Simpleton, and he may wait till he gets it again." So the two Boys walked towards the wood. "Now give me the Wand,"

said he eagerly to Thomas. He gave it willingly, saying, "Thou knowest that he who asks for more than he wants shall be punished." But the other took it quickly, and ran to an old and spreading Beech-tree, and called, at the same time knocking most violently against the trunk of the tree:—

"Wave, wave thy boughs, thou darling Tree,
With golden splendour me enfold:
Shed down thy golden leaves on me—
'Tis Gold I ask thee, give but Gold."

"But gold, but gold," was the answer to the prayer; and the Boy soon fell under the rain of the golden Leaves, and was killed by the fulfilment of his desire. There he lay in a golden grave; Thomas ran towards him, but there stood also the strange Child who had given him the wand. He picked it up and vanished with it. All the gold

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that had killed the covetous Boy belonged to Thomas, so that he and all the family had enough for the rest of their lives; and the sad end of the bad Boy was a constant warning to him, "to abuse no good gift which cometh from above."

But we will thank GoD when we instead of golden leaves shake golden apples and yellow pears from the trees, and will use these words,—

"Wave, wave thy boughs, thou darling Tree,
Nor e'er thy luscious fruits withhold:
Apples and plums we ask of thee,
But keep, O keep, thy magic Gold."







#### THE DEAR PUPIL.

In the good olden times, when Children looked up to their Schoolmaster as a Being of a higher and better nature, and were anxious to gain his favour, three little boys went to school to a very venerable Master, who taught them, with all the gentleness of advanced age, how the fear of God is the first step to true wisdom. But the youngest of the three was the Master's chief favourite; for he thought that he had outstripped the others. The two Boys perceived it, and asked the Master the reason of it, and how it was that he liked the youngest of them best, though they, as well as he, tried to do all that they

were asked and desired. The Master answered,— 'I will tell you the reason; but, before I do so, you must do one thing for me. Here are three little Birds; take each of you a Bird, and go out and look for a place where no one can see you, there kill the Bird, and bring it back to me." went, and soon returned with the dead Birds in their hands, except the youngest of them, who had his Bird alive in his hand. "And why did you not kill the Bird?" asked the Master. "Oh, Master, don't be angry; because I could not find the place which you desired me to seek—where no eye could see me. His Eye will see me everywhere, and therefore I brought it back alive." The Master looked round at the other two, who stood mute and ashamed. Now they understood why the Master preferred the Youngest; and they learned to fear that Eye, which sees not only our deeds but our very thoughts.

THE WAY TO THE CITY.





#### THE WAY TO THE CITY.

THE Parents of Veronica and Alfred had once to leave Home and to go up to the City, but before they went they said to their Children, Veronica and Alfred,—"Dear Children, remain quietly at home, and read in your little books; for the distance is too great for us to take you with us; but we shall soon be back, and then we will bring you beautiful things from the City." But one day, whilst their Parents were absent, the time grew tedious to the poor Children, because they did not like to read in their little books. Then they said, "Perhaps the distance is not so great as our parents told us; we also had

better go to the City." So saying they went out to the door, where they saw a Snail creeping slowly on. "Dear Snail," said the little Alfred, "pray can you tell us how far it is to the City?" after considering awhile answered, "It would take a Month of thirty-one days to go there." Then they thought, "If it is so far, we need not hurry;" and they went slowly on. But as they proceeded, they met an Ant, whom they addressed thus, "Dear Ant, how long will it take us to go to the City?" The Ant politely answered, "Half a month, if you travel with extraordinary speed." They again thought, "If it takes half a month with extraordinary speed, we need not hurry;" and they went slowly on. As they travelled onwards they left the road to gather flowers in the fields; there they met with a Mouse. to whom they said, "Dear Mouse, what time is required to go the City?" The Mouse replied, "Dear Children, it will take you a full week if

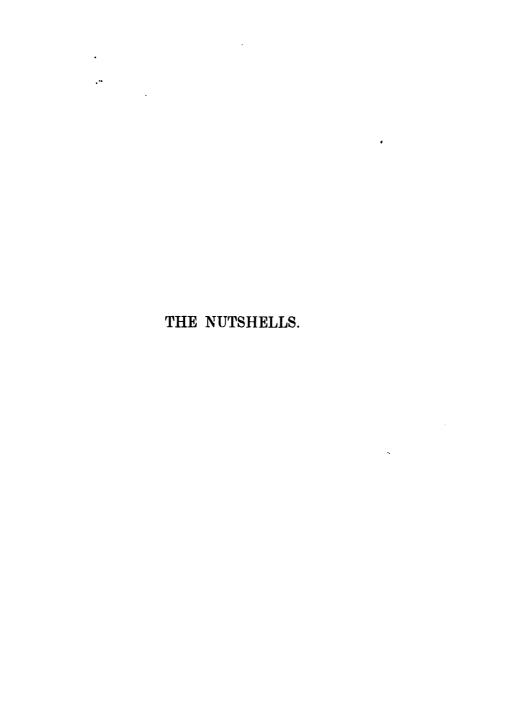
you don't stop on the road, or look about you." They thought, "Well! a week lasts from Sunday till Sunday comes again—this is a long time;" but they began to walk somewhat faster than before, and did not leave the road any more. Presently a Fox ran across the road. They asked him, saying, "Dear Fox, how far is it to the City?" And the Fox, a cunning animal, answered, "Two hundred thousand steps as long as I am are not sufficient to reach it." But he did not say that he included his tail in the measurement, for otherwise more than four hundred thousand would not have been enough. Then the Children thought, "This is very far, indeed;" and they began to run, but they could not overtake the Fox. As they were running a Horse appeared, and the little Children said, "Dear Horse, tell us, how far is it to the city?" The horse replied, "Twelve miles, \* or a day's journey, my little

<sup>\*</sup> Twelve German, or forty English miles.

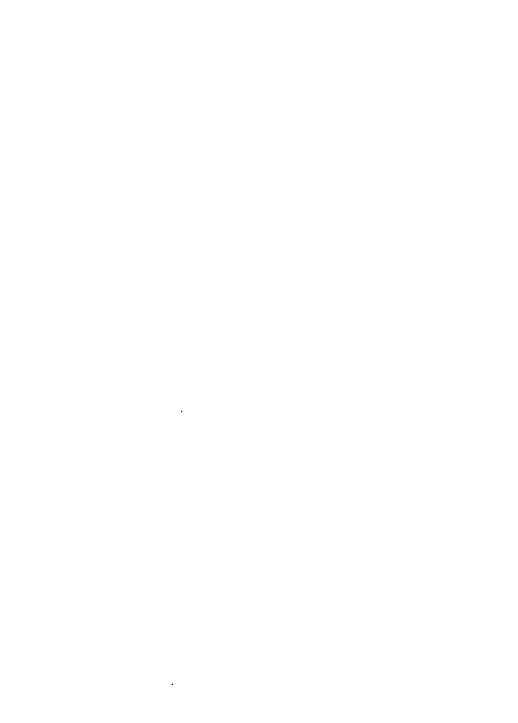
Ones," and ran off. These Children had grown fatigued and disappointed at the Horse's speed; they thought they could have taken a ride on him. As the evening drew on they felt very tired, and said to a Crow that was flying over their heads, "Dear Crow, how far is it to the City?" The Crow replied, "A short hour's journey, my dear Children, if you go by the straightest course," and with these words she flew away. The Children, who were striving to run in the direction in which the Crow had flown, did not observe how suddenly it had become dark, till they found themselves in a large forest, where they could see neither road nor path. They could now walk no more; they were too tired; and they did not venture to sleep for fear of the wild beasts. Hunger also kept them awake, for they had not eaten since they set out from home. They now sat there and wept, and regretted very much that they had ever left home; and Alfred said

to his little sister Veronica, "Our dear Father and Mother knew well that it was too far for us to go to the City; and we should have staid at home quietly like good Children, but to-morrow we will return at once." After making this resolution they slept peacefully the whole night, and as the sun awoke them the next morning, they saw two people coming towards them, a Man and a Woman. These proved to be their Parents, who were returning from Town. Both the Children were now most happy; they told all their adventures, to which their Father said, "You have been punished enough, therefore I will not punish you;" and their mother observed, "that nobody on earth means better towards Children than their own Parents do, who are their best advisers, and care most for them." The two Children never forgot this lesson in the Wood, and their Parents had great joy over them.













#### THE NUTSHELLS.

THERE were once in a school eight little Boys, who had a very old Schoolmaster. The ages of all the little Boys together did not come near that of the old Schoolmaster; for he was more than seventy years old, and had quite white hair; now when he mended a pen for one of the little Boys, his hands trembled so whilst he had the penknife in his fingers, that it made one quite uncomfortable to look at him; for it seemed as if he would cut his fingers instead of the pen: but yet nobody on earth could make better pens than he; and as for the little rod, he knew right well how to use it handsomely where it was required, and then nobody

would have seen either age or weakness. One of the Boys, the oldest of them all, could have testified to this. His bad little heart was filled with revenge, and he watched anxiously for an opportunity to give vent to it. One morning, before school began, he said to his School-fellows, "If you will not betray me, I will amuse you as you never were before amused in all your lives. Look here, I have four large nutshells: I will put them under the legs of the green Arm-chair, and then when our old Schoolmaster sits down, it will begin to crack, and crack, as if the whole chair were going to pieces, and the old Gentleman will get such a start." So saying, he began to do it, and threatened two Brothers, who did not seem to enjoy the fun, that if they betrayed him he would give them a fine beating; then he went to his place, took his books, and looked as if he could not wait till the proper hour to say his lesson to the old Master. In the

meantime the Master came in, and according to habit put his hat and stick in one corner of the room, and then went up to his green Arm-chair to sit down in it; but behold, it cracked as if the whole chair were bursting into atoms. The old Schoolmaster rose hastily, much frightened, and trembling all over; so much so, that he could scarcely hold himself upright. He tried to speak, but could not; tears filled his eyes; and after a while he could only ask the question, "Who has done this?" But there was no answer. The one who had done it said nothing; and the others were afraid that he would keep his word, and give them a great beating, for he was the oldest and strongest of all the little boys. But when the Schoolmaster had once more repeated the same question, and no answer was given, he said, with a faltering voice, "I can give no lessons to-day," took his hat and stick, and silently left the School-room. The Boys did the

same; not one said a word except the bad Boy, who repeated his threatenings in case of betrayal. Now, the next morning, one of the Brothers whom he had threatened most particularly, sprang out of bed, and went to the bed of his elder brother, saying, "Dear Charles, did you dream last night?" He answered, "Oh, I had a frightful dream! Tt. was as if I lay under a great Nutshell, over which was laid a great Beam, and on the Beam sat One with fiery eyes, who pressed the Beam down on me with such power that I nearly lost my senses. He said in an awful voice, 'If you don't tell the old Schoolmaster who did it, and caused him to be so frightened, I will squeeze you to death,' and with these words he pressed me so hard that I cried out in my anxiety, 'I myself will go to the Schoolmaster, and tell him all, and ask his forgiveness.' As soon as I had said these words, the Pressure, the Man, the Beam, and the Nutshell, suddenly

vanished." Charles, the younger brother, said surprised, "How strange! I dreamed precisely the same thing, and I still feel something remaining of the fear which I had all over me, and which must still be written on my face. Come, let us go at once to the old Schoolmaster, as we promised." And before School began they went and told all, and with many tears begged for his forgiveness. He kissed them in his joy, and went with them to the School-The bad Boy was sent away, and was not room. any more allowed to come to the School. He then went to another School, from which also he was sent away, because he was quite as bad there; and he could after this no longer find a School that would receive him.

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